

# No match to DNA profile in sexual assault case

Buffalo Press Staff article

Leon County Sheriff's Department personnel continue to investigate several sexual assaults committed in late July.

A suspect in the burglary of a habitation in Marquez was taken into custody and his DNA was submitted for testing in the case of a sexual assault on a 77-year-old Marquez woman on July 21.

That individual has been released from the Leon County Jail because the results of the DNA profile did not match the suspect, according to Deputy Victor Smith.

Another disturbing in-

cident occurred on July 19 when a Normangee woman was attacked while working in her yard. Deputy Smith reported that there is currently a registered sex offender in custody at the Madison County

jail who has been arrested for failure to comply with sex offender requirements. Smith made it clear that the individual has not been arrested for the Normangee attack but is considered a "person of inter-

est" in that case.

Anyone with information related to these assaults is urged to contact the Leon County Sheriff's Department.

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Massive flames lit the countryside as the GSI salt water disposal facility burned after a suspected lightning strike. A Round Prairie firefighter stands watch. Paul's Photos

## Lightning suspected in Marquez fire

By Sherry Matney

Six volunteer fire departments in addition to the Jewett Emergency Medical Services, Leon County Sheriff's office and the Texas Department of Public Safety, responded to a call from the Marquez Salt Water Treatment Plant. On August 26, 2009 at 5:30 p.m., workers at the treatment plant on Highway 7, two miles

west of Marquez, called 911 and reported a fire.

Leon Sheriff Jerry Wakefield suspects lightning struck a 2000 barrel tank battery which instantly erupted into flames because of the small amount of oil inside the tank.

There were no reports of injuries and the cost of the damage is not known at this time. The fire was contained

and units were released at 9:05 p.m.

GSI Oil & Gas, Bryan, owns the salt water disposal facility.

Volunteer fire fighters who responded to the call were: Jewett VFD, Sealy-Round Prairie VFD, Hilltop Lakes VFD, Centerville VFD, Buffalo VFD, and Flynn VFD.

## Jewett Police Chief Whittington resigns, interim appointed

By Sherry Matney

A troubled and concerned City Council met in a special called meeting on Monday, August 31, 2009 at the Jewett City Hall. The meeting was called to appoint an interim police chief following the resignation of Chief Larry Whittington.

Until recently the Jewett police force consisted of five patrolmen, including the chief. Several patrolmen have recently resigned -- the last two being Wade Thomas and Whittington -- bringing the Jewett Police force down to two. Patrolmen Marty Navarro and Sean O'Reilly are the remaining officers. Wade Thomas attended the meeting

but made no comment.

Mayor Judi Kirkpatrick opened the meeting by announcing that the first item on the agenda was to consider and act on hiring an interim police chief. She then said that Marty Navarro was interested in the job and she believed him to be qualified with an Advanced Police Officer Certification and several years' experience, including serving in the Leon County Sheriff's Department.

The Council agreed unanimously to hire Navarro subject to a six-month probation as stated in the Jewett City Policy. Councilman John Sitton said he felt the Chief should be out on patrol rather than spending his time in the office. Other council members agreed.

Next on the agenda was the need to lift the hiring freeze which the City has been under for several months. The Council voted to lift the hiring freeze and hire one additional officer, bringing the total force to three. There was some discussion about keeping only two but the new Interim Chief said that it would definitely take three patrolmen to be able to cover the city 24/7.

The Council discussed purchasing another patrol car since the ones currently being used are very high mileage and in poor condition. One person in attendance suggested buying a truck or SUV since the streets and road were in such bad shape,

however the Council did not agree and explained that cars would better suit the police department's needs.

When discussing where the money would come from to buy the car, Mayor Kirkpatrick said the city plans to apply for a grant to provide some of the money and perhaps sell two or three of the old vehicles and apply that to the funds to the new one.

John Sitton suggested that the Council see what is available and come back for further discussion at the regular meeting in two weeks. The group agreed.

Mayor Kirkpatrick explained the next item on the agenda was to act on revision to the Police Policy and Procedure Manual. She said she recommends changing the Police Chief requirement of Master to Advanced Police Officer Certificate. Kirkpatrick also recommended that the running portion of the Police Department Physical Test be omitted from the required qualifications. The Council approved both amendments.

The last item on the agenda was to consider and act on the sale of one of the old police vehicles. Chris Johnson, Constable for Leon County, offered a sealed bid on one of the white cars. He also offered to be a reserve officer for Jewett if needed. Mayor Kirkpatrick opened the sealed envelop and disclosed that it contained a \$500 bid. The Council voted to accept the funds and sell the vehicle.

## ESD #4 Board chooses Legacy

by Vanessa Goodwyn

The Board of ESD #4 held a special called meeting on Thursday, August 27, to determine which ambulance provider would service the district. The two bidders under consideration, Legacy EMS and Jewett EMS, had each received two votes at the Board's previous meet-

ing on August 13, and in the absence of Board President Joey Rodell, no decision was made at that time.

During Thursday's special called meeting, which was well attended by interested residents of the taxing district, the Board members voted again. Vera Barnett and Jerry Moore again voted for

the locally-based Jewett Ambulance; Joe Echols and Pat Smith again cast their vote for Legacy, which presented the lower bid (\$15,000/year cheaper). The tie-breaking vote came down to President Rodell, and the three-year contract for ESD #4's ambulance service was awarded to Legacy EMS.

## County authorizes Expo master plan

by Vanessa Goodwyn

County residents will now be able to pay their local taxes on-line or with credit cards, thanks to an agreement between Leon County and Pritchard & Abbott, Inc. A 4% fee will be charged the residents if they opt to use the service. The Leon County Commissioners approved the internet processing professional services agreement early in their regular monthly meeting on Thursday, August 27th.

The commissioners were treated to a sample breakfast prior to the meeting, as part of the budget presentation by the Department of Aging and Disability Service's Home Delivered Meal Program. Leigh Anne Ross and Ronnie Gipson gave a presentation on the state-sponsored "Meals on Wheels" and federal "Home Bound Meals" programs, meal costs and the county's involvement in the DADS program. The commissioners voted to continue the program in the coming year but as of October 1 will no longer serve clients in Madisonville and North Zulch due to the fact that Madison County has not contributed promised funds to support the program. The program's 94 clients will be reduced to 67.

The new Expo Center project, touted as a benefit to the future of the county and especially its youth, was once again on the commissioners' agenda. Architect Mark Thacker presented a proposal to do a master plan for the new Expo Center project, offering his services for the master plan at no cost to the county beyond his travel costs and

reimbursables, with architectural services at 6%. Thacker explained his offer: "I've been aware of the concept for this project for many years. It's a project I can strongly support. A lot of the things I learned about life and teamwork and citizenship I learned in Ag Science." The commissioners hired Thacker to do a master plan for the Expo Center project.

In other business, the commissioners:

- approved a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance;
- considered adopting a district court records archives fee;
- authorized Election Official Robin Shafer to consolidate voting precincts for the 2009 Constitution Amendment Election due to an expected light turnout. Going down

from 30 machines to 17, Shafer explained, will save the county \$3,000.



Architect Mark Thacker

## Oakwood ISD calls for a Bond Election

By Melissa Missildine

Several weeks ago, the Oakwood School Board formed a special committee consisting of community members from the surrounding areas, as well as Oakwood. Last night, based on the recommendation of that committee, brought to the Board by committee representatives Misti Edgemon and Sheri Smith, the Board voted unanimously to bring a \$4 million dollar bond election to the public on November 3, 2009. All members were present at this meeting, except Kim Hardin.

This bond election is being called to build an elementary school. At the present time, Oakwood Elementary is housed in ten-year-old portable buildings. These portable buildings have begun to show a lot of wear and tear and repairs have been numerous. Problems with the plumbing in the restrooms and with the water fountains are one of the larger issues with these portable buildings. With two hundred twenty-nine students currently enrolled in O.I.S.D. and one hundred twenty of

SEE Oakwood, page 4A

## Clouds just tease farmers in the Flo Community



This strange-looking cloud was full of lightning and thunder but apparently not a drop of rain. Farmers watched hopefully as the cloud shifted and rewarded surrounding communities with up to an inch of rain... but the Flo Community is still bone dry.

Sherry's



Marty Navarro is Jewett's Interim Police Chief.

Sherry's Shots